MIT's Oldest and Largest Newspaper

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The Tech

Established 1881

Volume 139, Number 1 | Thursday, February 7, 2019

WEATHER, p. 2

THU: 41°F | 39°F Showers

FRI: 57°F | 23°F Showers

SAT: 32°F | 18°F Sunny

Swastika drawn on Lobby 7 Black History Month display

MIT Police: incident doesn't meet hate crime criteria

By Whitney Zhang and Soomin Chun
NEWS EDITORS

A two-foot-long swastika with the message "Buddhist Swastik History is Knowledge" written underneath it was found Tuesday morning on a poster that was part of "BlackHack," a Black History Month display in Lobby 7.

The display contains photographs of the founding of the Black Students' Union, busing in Boston schools, and MIT students' protests for MIT's divestment from companies with ties to the South African economy when South Africa was enforcing apartheid. The display also includes a large poster with a fist and additional posters with markers for passersby to write on. It was organized by the Black Students' Union and the Black Graduate Student Association.

Gabby Ballard '19, a member of the BSU Political Action Committee, found the swastika; within 13 minutes, the BSU removed the poster with the swastika and replaced it with new poster paper, said Kelvin Green II '21, co-chair of the BSU, in an interview with *The Tech.*

According to Green, the paper with the swastika also had messages that read, "Still, once the

Display, Page 2

DANIEL GOODWIN

Corban Swain G recites his poem "The Silence of Michael Brown" at a student-organized protest Monday.

Black student groups organize, hold die-in

About 60 students participated and 10 faculty and staff attended protest

By Zoe Anderson
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

The Black Students' Union, Black Graduate Student Association, and Black Business Student Association protested and held a die-in Monday. Protesters laid on the floor in the area connecting Lobby 7 and the Infinite Corridor to represent those who have died as a result of police brutality.

About 60 black undergraduate and graduate students participated in the protest and about 10 faculty and staff attended, Kelvin Green II '21, co-chair of the BSU, said in an interview with *The Tech.*

There have been many die-ins on college campuses following the shootings of Michael Brown, Jr., Tamir Rice, and Eric Garner, by police officers. "We wanted to bring [die-ins] back to show that [black people are] still dealing with the same issues," such as police brutality, "and we wanted people to say, 'Why would someone lie on the ground for a prolonged period of time?' and for it to be a conversation starter around how we can change the system so we don't have to do things like this," Green said.

Die-in, Page 5

Reif decides that the Institute will not sever its ties with Saudi Arabia

Individual faculty members who are conducting projects relating to Saudi Arabia can choose whether to disengage

By Whitney Zhang and Jessica Shi
EDITORS

MIT will not be severing its ties with Saudi Arabia, a decision that concludes an internal reassessment sparked by the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October 2018.

In a letter to the MIT community Wednesday, President L. Rafael Reif announced that he agreed with the recommendations put forward in a previous report, which concluded that there was no "compelling case" for MIT to withdraw from any of its existing relationships with Saudi private or government-funded sponsors and organizations.

However, Reif also denounced Saudi Arabia's human rights violations in his letter.

"As many of you have made plain, in the present situation, if MIT simply continues to work with Saudi state entities without comment, we risk having our silence taken as an endorsement of the regime's behavior — an unacceptable result," Reif acknowledged.

"For the record then, let me be clear: MIT utterly condemns such brutal human rights violations, discrimination and suppression of dissent, including the murder of Jamal Khashoggi," Reif continued.

The initial report, published in December, was written by Associate Provost Richard Lester PhD '80, who advises the administration on international affairs.

Lester opened its contents for a public comment period that ended Jan. 15, which prompted 111 comments from 123 individuals, according to a summary linked in Reif's letter.

Twenty-four of the 42 faculty responses were "strongly opposed to a continuation of relations with the Saudi government" and another seven leaned against it. Of the remaining responses, which were submitted from a range of students, postdocs, staff, and alumni in the MIT community, 76 percent either strongly opposed or leaned against the recommendation.

However, Lester and Reif noted in an interview with *The Tech* Tuesday that even though the majority of responses criticized the recommendation, these comments did not amount to a community vote against the recommendations.

Reif added, "I want to listen to every point of view and I want to make sure that I'm not missing anything. But at the end of the day, I just have to do what I think is the right thing for MIT, and yes, I'm sure that quite a few are going to disagree with that decision."

Reif emphasized that he did not want to single-handedly decide whether to cut ties with Saudi Arabia; rather, he believed the choice should be left to individual faculty. Lester concurred, stating, "The individual faculty members who are

Saudi Arabia, Page 5

IN SHORT

The deadline to register for spring semester classes is this Friday, Feb. 8.

A blood drive will be held in La Sala de Puerto Rico on the second floor of the Student Center next Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 1 p.m.–6 p.m. and next Tuesday from 8 a.m.–1 p.m. Visit the following website for more details and to make an appointment: http://web.mit.edu/blood-drive/www/.

Third quarter PE classes begin next Monday, Feb. 11.

Interested in **joining** *The Tech*? Stop by for dinner Sunday at 6 p.m. or email *join@tech.mit.edu.*

SHARON CHAO—THE TECH

Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz looks on at a group of protesters outside the Student Center during xFair Monday. The protesters were rallying against xFair's inclusion of several companies, including Lockheed Martin and General Dynamics, that have sold weapons to Saudi Arabia.

Thirty-three students successfully move via the spring housing lottery

Thirty-three of the 40 students who entered the spring housing lottery were able to switch residence halls for the spring semester.

Students who wish to switch dormitories have two options. First, they can enter a lottery that takes places in December for the spring semester and in March for the fall semester. Alternatively, they can join a waiting list at any time during the semester and switches happen as space becomes available, according to Jennifer Hapgood-White, director of residential services, in a statement emailed to *The Tech.*

"Since 2014, an average of 92 percent of undergraduate switch requests have been fulfilled each semester," Hapgood-White wrote.

— Jenny Gao

THE POWER OF A SYMBOL

BSU's BlackHack was vandalized with a swastika, but the project's message about black history at MIT still stands strong. **OPINION, p. 4**

MADDENING PROPAGANDA

MTG puts on a rendition of a propaganda film about the source of all corruption: weed. **ARTS, p. 8**

SURREAL REALITY

Rona Wang '21 debuts a series of short stories about modern experiences as a Chinese-American woman. **ARTS, p. 8**

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WEATHER

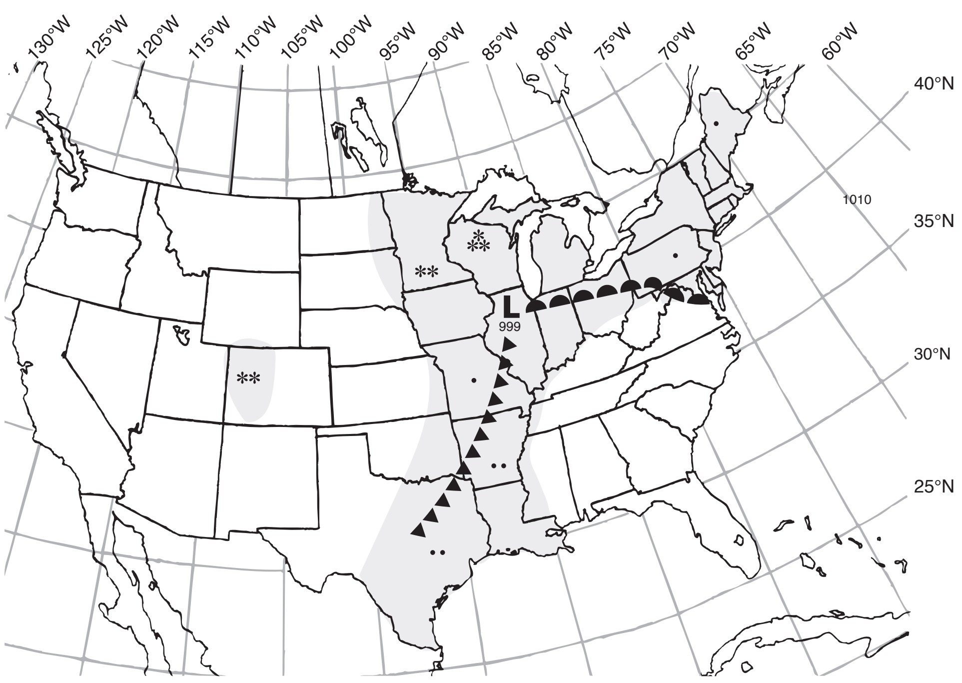
Cool, calm weekend ahead

By Jordan Benjamin
STAFF METEOROLOGIST

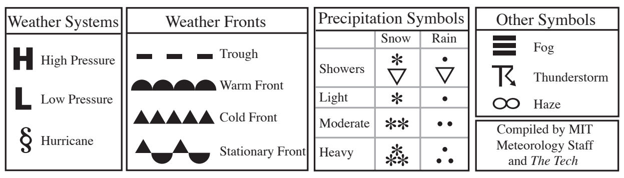
After tying the record high of 65 °F (18 °C) on Tuesday, Boston has rapidly returned to regular winter programming. A strengthening low pressure system will bring widespread rain to New England today and early tomorrow before pushing a cold front through tomorrow afternoon. The weekend will once again feel like winter, with highs in the lower 30s °F, lows around 20 °F (-7 °C), and breezy winds. Long-term, Boston will remain in an active weather pattern with cool, dry weather punctuated periodically by low-pressure systems and precipitation events. Whether these events bring any wintry weather remains the big question. This winter remains historically devoid of snow, with only 2.3 inches (5.8 cm) recorded at Logan airport to date compared to a normal of 25.5 inches (64.8 cm). The immediate future lends no help on the snow front, but much of the cold season remains ahead. There remains time for snow lovers' dreams to come true, but for now snow haters can rejoice a while longer.

Extended Forecast

Today: Showers possible. High around 41°F (5°C). Winds NE at 5–10 mph.
Tonight: Showers possible. Low around 39°F (4°C). Winds NE at 5–10 mph.
Tomorrow: Showers then clearing. Breezy. High around 57°F (14°C). Low around 23°F (-5°C). W winds at 10–20 mph.
Saturday: Sunny. High around 32°F (0°C). Low around 18°F (-8°C).
Sunday: Sunny. High around 36°F (2°C).



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Thursday, February 7, 2019



Protest against MIT's role in the war in Yemen held during xFair

Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, and General Atomics are among the 'war profiteers'

By Sharon Chao
NEWS AND FEATURES DIRECTOR

The organizations Massachusetts Peace Action and the Coalition to Stop the Genocide in Yemen coordinated a protest against the Institute's role in the war in Yemen during MIT's xFair Feb. 4.

The protest, which took place outside the Student Center, was held for two reasons. Firstly, several companies that were present at xFair have sold weapons to the governments of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), who in turn are using them in the war in Yemen.

Secondly, a December 2018 report by Associate Provost Richard Lester PhD '80 recommended against the termination of any existing engagement with Saudi private or government-funded sponsors and organizations.

The protest called out Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, and General Atomics for selling weapons to Saudi Arabia and the UAE. In particular, Lockheed Martin produced a bomb that was used by the Saudi-led coalition in an airstrike on a school bus in Yemen that killed more than 40 children in August 2018.

"War profiteers are exhibiting at xFair and recruiting MIT students, which is antithetical to what universities are supposed to support," Cole Harrison, executive director of Massachusetts Peace Action, said in an interview with *The Tech.*

"The regime in Saudi Arabia is one of the most repressive in the world and is responsible for the largest humanitarian crisis in the world today. We are asking MIT to end its relationship with Saudi Arabia and the military companies that are providing weapons for this terrible war against Yemen," protester Paul Shannon said in an interview with *The Tech.*

Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz appeared at the start of the protest for several minutes. The Office of the Vice Chancellor, through the Career Advising and Professional Development office, provides some logistical support for the xFair. xFair is a student-run career fair and tech expo.

"I asked them [the protesters] to move from the entrance to the fair to a nearby campus space, which is the area we had requested they use when we spoke with them the day before the event," Waitz wrote in an email to *The Tech*. "They declined and we allowed them to stay where they were."

Waitz was not able to answer follow-up questions specifying the "nearby campus space" before the publication of this article.

The war in Yemen, which began in 2015, is between two factions: the Houthis, who are an armed Islamic political group, and an international coalition led by Saudi Arabia that supports the current Yemeni president Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

More than 5,900 civilians have been killed in the conflict so far, and three million people have been forced from their homes by the fighting, according to Amnesty International.

Amnesty International has documented 36 air strikes by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition that have violated international humanitarian law, which includes air strikes that appear to have deliberately targeted civilians and civilian buildings such as hospitals, schools, markets, and mosques.

Kaitlyn Hennacy contributed reporting.

BSU responds, 'We remain grounded in the strength of our community'

Display, from Page 1

Buddhists saw it was being used for hate, they stopped using it. This is disrespectful," and "This is wrong, the German one is turned."

Violence Prevention and Response and the Bias Response Team were alerted of the incident.

The MIT Police determined the incident "does not meet the criteria for a hate crime" and is still investigating the act, according to a statement emailed to *The Tech*. The BSU is planning to file a crime report, Green said.

"Consistent with the cyclical nature of racial and racist progress, it came only 23 hours later: not in the form of an assassination or a riot — that is, not in the form of physical violence — but in the form of hate expressed through six lines [of the swastika] that represent global systemic violence, racism, and anti-Semitism," Green and Mimi Wahid '21, attorney general of the BSU, wrote in an opinion article for *The Tech.*

"Though this act of hatred disturbs us, it neither destroys us nor diminishes our power. We remain grounded in the strength of our community," the article continued.

The following day, Vice President and Dean for Student Life Suzy Nelson sent a letter to the MIT community detailing the incident.

"While the symbol has positive origins in the Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain faith traditions, in a modern Western context, other versions of this symbol have been used to convey a message of hate, racism, and anti-Semitism," she wrote.

She continued, "But the fact that it was drawn on a Black History Month display designed to encourage community discussion about issues affecting the black community and celebrate black student activism at MIT makes it that much worse."

She encouraged the MIT community to "passionately reaffirm the core values our community stands for: empathy, compassion, inclusiveness, and respect for all."

Zoe Anderson contributed reporting.

If you know more about this incident, contact 617-253-1212 or report anonymously here. *A few of the resources available to members of the community, as described by Nelson:*

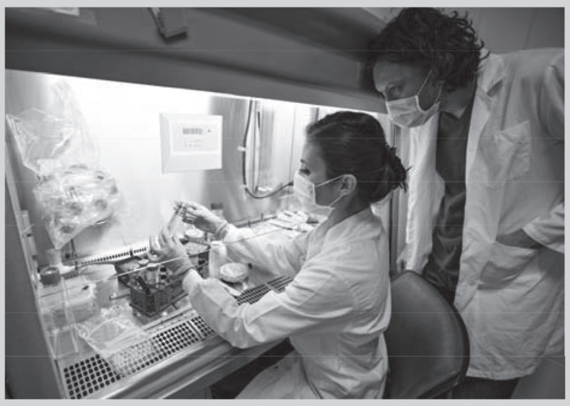
Student Mental Health and Counseling works with students to identify, understand, and solve problems, and to help transform that understanding into positive action. Title IX and Bias Response offers resources and reporting options for bias incidents related to race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or other identities. The Institute Community and Equity Office's mission is to advance a respectful and caring community that embraces diversity and empowers everyone to learn and do their best at MIT.

GABBY BALLARD

The Bias Response Team was alerted to a drawing to a swastika on a Black History Month poster in Lobby 7 on Tuesday. In an email, the team wrote, "Racism, hate, divisiveness, and bullying have no place at MIT."

Have something to say?
Write **opinion** for *The Tech*!
opinion@tech.mit.edu

Do you wish your sport was covered?
Hello, Athletes, look at the sports page, now back to you, now back to the sports page, now back to you. Sadly, your sport isn't there, but if you started writing for *The Tech*, it could be. Look down, back up, where are you? You're on the front page. Anything is possible when you write for *The Tech*.
sports@tech.mit.edu



New Spring 2019 Class Offering: MIT 3.S04, 21H.S04

The Social Life of Materials:

Past – Present – Future

OPEN TO MIT UNDERGRADUATE & GRADUATE STUDENTS
(LIMITED ENROLLMENT)
12 Units / MW 9:30am - 11am / RM 4-149
Dr. Ellan Spero / Professor Christine Ortiz

A thoughtful, sustainable, equitable, and ethical future for materials development can be shaped by a rich understanding of how the **history, social context, and culture of the material science and engineering discipline** shapes **trajectories of discovery, innovation, and broader social impact**, and vice versa. Join us for this exciting new course where students will carry out a collaborative research project on this subject through the lens of the MIT Department of Materials Science and Engineering. The research project will involve social studies of the disciplinary culture of materials research and its relation to the production of knowledge through inter-related topics such as **material culture, knowledge systems, organizational structure and culture, ethics, human cognitive processes, incentive structures and broader social influences**. Integrative research methods will include historical analysis through archival research, oral histories, interviews, a review of ethnographic methods and case studies integrated with analysis of contemporary and future-oriented disciplinary literature, bibliometrics, and scenario mapping. A final exhibition will assemble embedded knowledge and social context of disciplinary cultures, and consider the implications for contemporary trends in materials research and **how these perspectives could be utilized to foster a more thoughtful, sustainable, equitable, and ethical future through materials research**.

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OPINION

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Established 1881

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GUEST COLUMN

When hate strikes

Leaders of the Black Students’ Union reflect on racist retaliation to BlackHack

By K. L. Green II and Mimi Wahid

We are two students who, through our identities, are inextricably tied to the racial progress and racist retaliation of both MIT and the United States. Here we provide our narrative on the Black Students’ Union’s (BSU) recognition of Black History Month and what it exposed about MIT. This is love:

BlackHack serves a dual purpose. First, for the black community at MIT, BlackHack brings us together. It is a time to gather in the BSU’s storied lounge and reflect on our shared history and culture, finding pride and resolve in our blackness as we kick off Black History Month and a new semester. Our community shares ownership of the project. And, for one week, we are able to see ourselves reflected in one of MIT’s most iconic spaces. Our choice of Lobby 7 is purposeful; day-to-day, we pass under the lobby’s inscripted words — “Established for Advancement and Development of Science, its Application to Industry, the Arts, Agriculture, and Commerce” (punctuation added)— which are reminiscent of MIT’s ties to slavery and the agricultural south. However, for five days in February, as our Black History Month banners draw our eyes away from that inscription, we are able to find joy in that space in spite of that legacy. Our second purpose is external. Through BlackHack, we send a message to everyone who passes through Lobby 7: We are here, we matter, and we will not remain silent.

Though this BlackHack tradition was born in 2018, it honors a much richer history of black people at MIT: a history of activism that was catalyzed by the founding of the BSU over fifty years ago and continues through today. For this year’s BlackHack, the BSUPAC spotlighted three moments of protest, conflict, and solidarity in this community’s history.

The images used in BlackHack were chosen carefully. Looking from left to right, you read fifty years of this community’s racial history; you read fifty years of protests and of struggle; you read the enduring and incomparable legacy of the BSU. In one glance, you can see how we got to the place we are at now.

The first image was taken in 1968 when the MIT BSU was founded by the handful of black MIT students who sought refuge from the various forms of discrimination they faced on campus. The second image, titled *The Soiling of Old Glory* (1976), depicts the violent reality of desegregation in the United States through the lens of the Boston bussing crisis. The third image depicts a shantytown created by students in 1987 to protest MIT’s failure to divest from apartheid-era South Africa.

At noon on Monday, seventy members of MIT’s black community gathered under our display in Lobby 7 to commemorate the legacy of activism that defines black history in the United States and to protest the pervasive injustice in this nation that equally defines our history. Less than 24 hours later, we wove with urgency through the Infinite to return to Lobby 7. We were there not to protest, not to reflect, but instead to tear down a banner that had been vandalized with a two-foot diameter swastika.

Leading author and historian Ibram X. Kendi said it best when he expressed that racial progress in America has always — and in all ways — been followed by racist progress. In 1968, the MIT BSU was founded; in 1968, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. In 1976, young black Bostonians were being bussed from their local neighborhoods to schools in white neighborhoods; in 1976, violence was employed by white supremacists to discourage these young black scholars from seeking educational equity. In 1987, MIT students joined together to protest MIT’s stance on apartheid; in 1987, the MIT Police disregarded the students’ legal and permitted right to protest by arresting them and destroying their politicized shantytown.

On Monday, black undergraduates, graduates, faculty, and staff came together to assert our presence, power, and purpose at MIT. However, if 1968, 1976, and 1987 saw the cycle of racial and racist progress, why would 2019 be any different? So, on Monday, we also readied ourselves for the inevitable racist retaliation that was to follow BlackHack.

Consistent with the cyclical nature of racial and racist progress, it came only 23 hours later: not in the form of an assassination or a riot — that is, not in the form of physical violence — but in the form of hate expressed through six lines that represent global systemic violence, racism, and anti-Semitism.

Though this act of hatred disturbs us, it neither destroys us nor diminishes our power. We remain grounded in the strength of our community.

To the Black community at MIT
and those who face hatred every day,
We hear you. We are with you.
And we will continue the fight.

K. L. Green II is a member of the MIT Class of 2021 and the co-chair of the Black Students’ Union. Mimi Wahid is a member of the MIT Class of 2021 and the attorney general of the Black Students’ Union.

CORRECTIONS

The Tech’s issue on Jan. 10 was printed by Monitor Commercial Printing, not Turley Publications, Inc. The issue on Jan. 17 was printed by Graphic Developments, Inc.

OPINION POLICY

Editorials are the official opinion of *The Tech*. They are written by the Editorial Board, which consists of Editor in Chief Jessica Shi and Opinion Editor Fiona Chen.

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should say grammar

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Some commenters criticize Lester's cost-benefit analysis

Saudi Arabia, from Page 1

conducting these projects … should be making the decision."

No faculty have expressed any wishes to disengage with Saudi Arabia thus far, Lester said.

According to Lester's summary, many commenters took issue with or found "implausible" the claim that MIT's cooperation with Saudi entities could push the country in a more progressive direction. Lester responded that without further evidence, these comments could not amount to more than just speculation.

Others believed that Lester's cost-benefit analysis was not applicable for a situation like this because of its "special moral weight." Lester responded that although the situation did pose "unique moral questions," other aspects of the situation, such as the research benefits of collaboration, also carry their own moral weight.

Additionally, some believed that MIT cutting ties with Saudi Arabia would define MIT as a voice for change and create a pathway for other organizations to also cut ties with Saudi Arabia. Lester disagreed, stating that he did not believe that MIT should "advance a policy goal … unless the topic bears directly on our core academic mission."

Some commenters agreed with Lester's recommendations. They concurred that there was potential for social progress through joint programs and research, such as the development of King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM) and other initiatives that allow students and young professionals to participate in entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, some commented that by their own experiences, they felt that Saudi Aramco was a progressive organization with Western values. Saudi Aramco provides about $5 million in funds for MIT each year and is a member of the MIT Energy Initiative.

Lester recommended in his original report that MIT should continue its engagements with Saudi Arabia, be willing to consider new engagements, and place the onus of terminating engagements with individual PIs.

After the comment period, Lester added recommendations that MIT should openly condemn the actions of Saudi Arabia, strengthen internal processes for evaluations, and "incorporate broad termination rights" in new contractual relationships with foreign entities. In his interview with *The Tech*, Lester noted that the costs associated with termination rights were considered as part of his evaluation.

MIT faculty have worked with researchers at KFUPM since 2008 in a joint seven-year research and educational program to tackle problems related to the desalination of seawater and solar energy. In addition, the Ibn Khaldun Fellowship has sponsored Saudi Arabian women with PhDs to come to MIT to spend a year conducting research with MIT faculty since 2012.

According to Lester's report, in the most recent fiscal year, MIT received approximately $7.2 million in sponsored research funding from Saudi Arabia.

Soomin Chun contributed reporting.

Die-in lasted four minutes to protest and commemorate Michael Brown's death

DANIEL GOODWIN

Members of the Black Students' Union, Black Graduate Student Association, and the Black Business Students Association held a die-in in Lobby 7 on Monday.

Die-in, from Page 1

Corban Swain G, co-chair of the BGSA, read aloud a poem he wrote as an undergraduate student in the aftermath of the shooting of Brown, titled "The Silence of Michael Brown." After the line, "If Michael Brown's body could talk, this is what is would say [*sic*]", students began a four-minute die-in.

Swain told *The Tech* in an interview that onlookers stopped, listened, and seemed "surprised but engaged." Other passersby stepped over the students lying on the floor, according to Green.

The die-in lasted four minutes to symbolize how police left Brown's body uncovered for four hours, Green said. Brown, an eighteen-year-old black man, was fatally shot by a white police officer in 2014.

After Swain concluded his poem, the students linked arms in a circle and placed their hands over their hearts. They sang songs — including "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" (the "Black National Anthem") and "We Shall Overcome," which was a key song of the Civil Rights Movement — and prayed for justice.

The BSU also organized Black Hack, the display celebrating Black History Month in Lobby 7. The motivation was "one, to make more people aware of Black History Month at MIT, and two, to inspire within the black community a sense of activism and corral people together to express themselves in a very public way," Green said.

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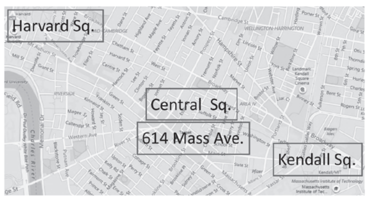

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Solution to Groundhog

from page 6

2	7	1	5	6	8	4	3	9
8	6	9	1	3	4	7	5	2
4	3	5	7	2	9	8	6	1
5	1	2	4	9	7	6	8	3
3	9	7	8	5	6	2	1	4
6	8	4	2	1	3	9	7	5
9	4	8	3	7	1	5	2	6
7	2	3	6	4	5	1	9	8
1	5	6	9	8	2	3	4	7

Do you like doodling during class?
Are your psets covered with drawings?
If so, become a Tech Illustrator!

Solution to Shadow

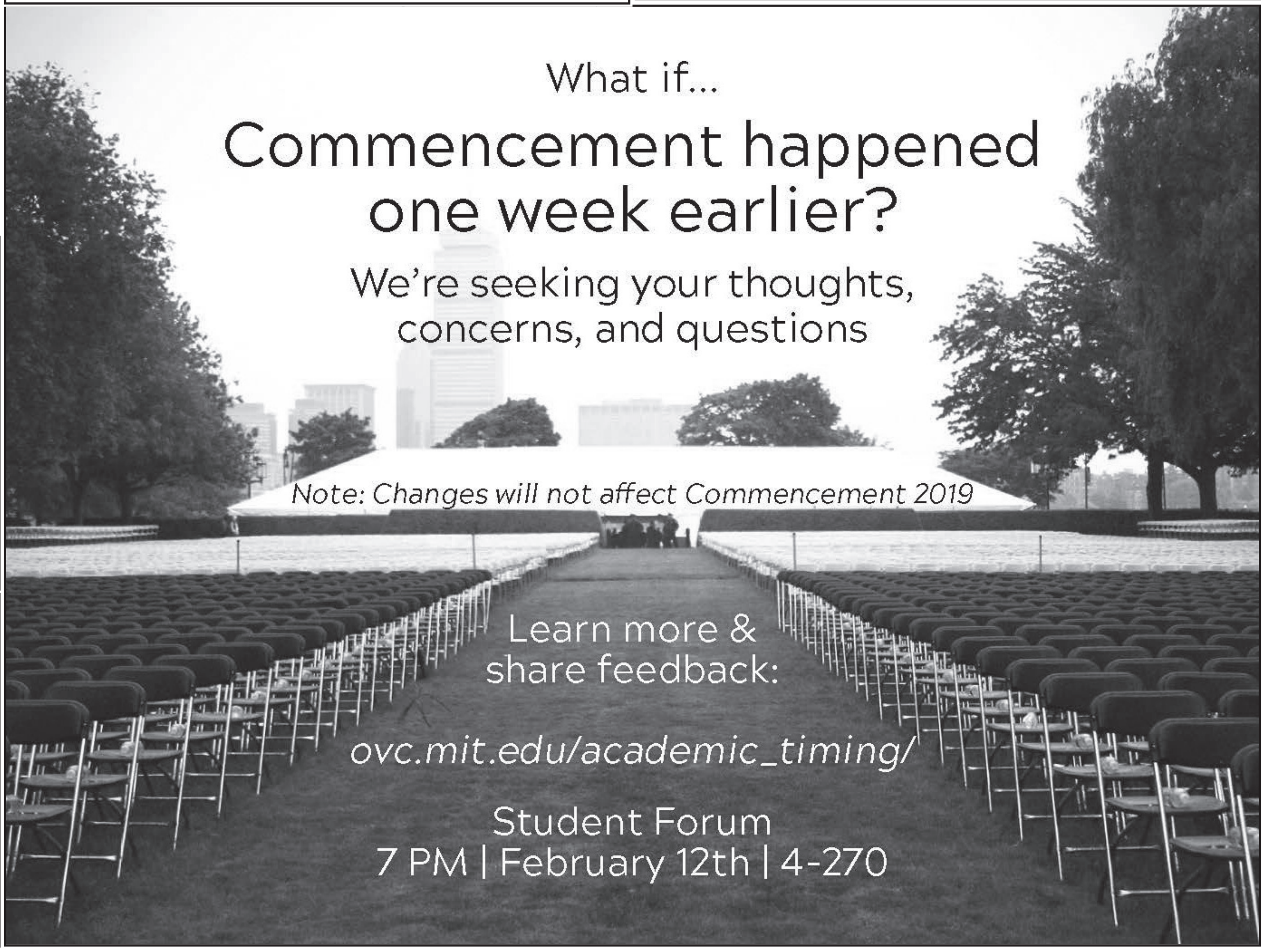
from page 6

3	4	2	5	1	6
5	6	4	1	3	2
4	5	3	6	2	1
1	2	6	3	5	4
2	3	1	4	6	5
6	1	5	2	4	3

Solution to Stake

from page 6

2	7	1	5	6	8	4	3	9
8	6	9	1	3	4	7	5	2
4	3	5	7	2	9	8	6	1
5	1	2	4	9	7	6	8	3
3	9	7	8	5	6	2	1	4
6	8	4	2	1	3	9	7	5
9	4	8	3	7	1	5	2	6
7	2	3	6	4	5	1	9	8
1	5	6	9	8	2	3	4	7



Groundhog

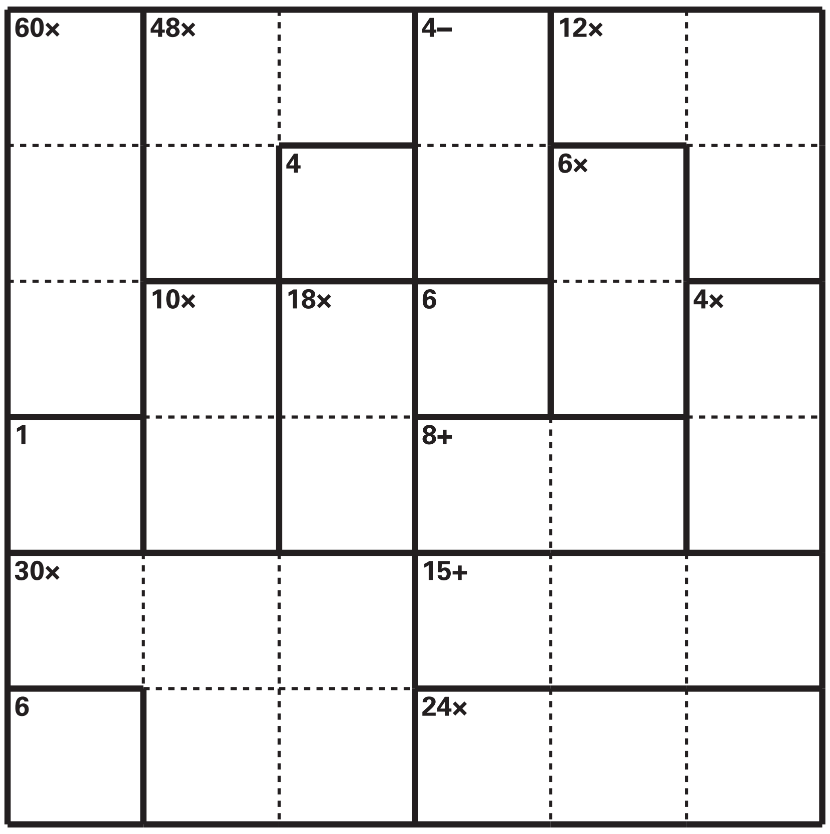
Solution, page 5

				6	8		3	
8	6							2
4		5	7			8		
	1	2	4					3
		7				2		
6					3	9	7	
		8			1	5		6
7							9	8
	5		9	8				

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

Shadow

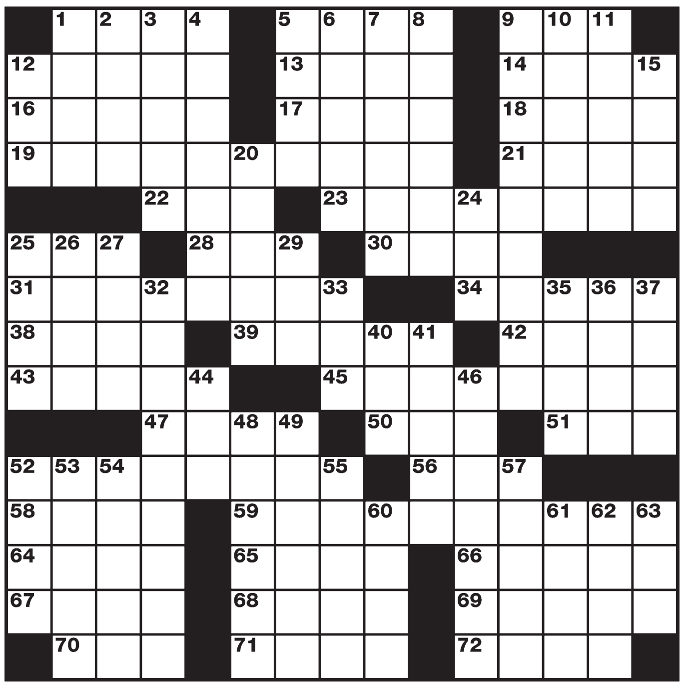
Solution, page 5



Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column and row contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1–6. Follow the mathematical operations for each box.

Stake a Claim by Sally R. Stein

Solution, page 5

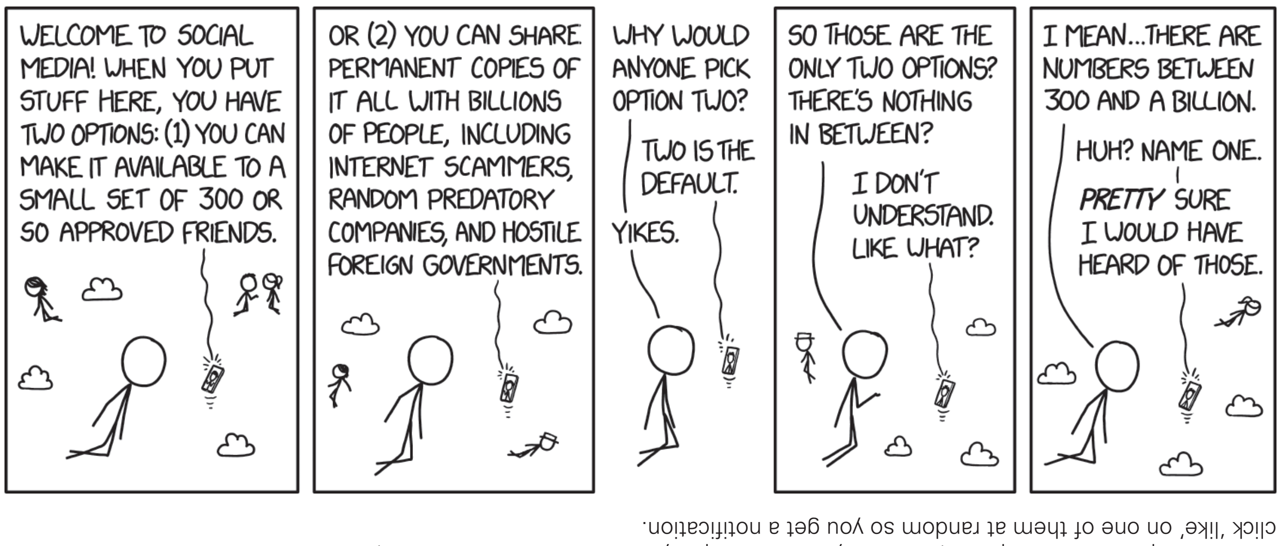


ACROSS
1 24-hr. bank conveniences
5 Con game
9 Petroleum production measure: Abbr.
12 ONE WAY sign shape
13 Female choir voice
14 Actor Alda
16 Actress Witherspoon
17 Explorer Ponce de __
18 Actress Winslet or Mulgrew
19 Hold firm against opposition
21 Canyon sound
22 Arch city in Mo.
23 Get up again
25 "Halt, __ goes there?"
28 Wide shoe with
30 In __ (well-coordinated)
31 Acorn producers
34 Insects that sting
38 Former Italian coin
39 Previous
42 On an even __ (well-balanced)
43 Tiny bit of snow
45 Casino wheel-and-ball game
47 Stately sources of shade
50 Game of Thrones cable channel
51 Use needle and thread
52 Talk freely
56 Cubes that cool drinks
58 Word-of-mouth
59 Be penalized in football, for example
64 Letterhead illustration
65 Arctic vessel hazard
66 Sophia of films
67 Capital of Norway
68 Otherwise
69 Narrowly defeated
70 "A mouse!"
71 Changes the color of
72 Search for

DOWN
1 Region
2 Difficult journey
3 Ten Commandments recipient
4 Turtleneck, for instance
5 Shaker contents
6 Fully understood
7 Makes amends
8 Workweek start for many
9 Use the oven to prepare dessert
10 Color of a crow
11 Wood-shaping machine
12 Shirtsleeve insert
15 Gas in store window signs
20 Visit dreamland
24 Point opposite ESE
25 Howling wild canine
26 Precipitation in pellets
27 Cajun veggie
29 Occupational suffix for auction
32 See what there is to see
33 "Dear __ or Madam . . ."
35 Full collections
36 Sampras of tennis
37 Whole bunch
40 __ and aah
41 Toy cube inventor
44 Antlered animal
46 Venues
48 Crowded around
49 Without doubt
52 Fly alone
53 Plain talk
54 National bird
55 Saying few words
57 Wear away
60 Improves, as wine
61 Advocate strongly
62 Onionlike veggie
63 Conclude

[2106] Sharing Options

xkcd
A webcomic of romance, sarcasm, math, and language
by Randall Munroe



How about posts that are public, but every time a company accesses a bunch of them, the API makes their CEO's account click 'like' on one of them at random so you get a notification.

MIT List Visual Arts Center

New Exhibitions

Kapwani Kiwanga: Safe Passage

Kathleen Ryan: Cultivator

On view: February 8 – April 21

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Left: Installation view of: Kapwani Kiwanga, *A wall is just a wall (and nothing more at all),* Esker Foundation, Canada, 2018. Commissioned by Esker Foundation Commission Fund.
Right: Kathleen Ryan, *Diana*, 2017. Courtesy the artist and Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles.

MIT List Visual Arts Center

THEATER REVIEW

Raucous musical *Reefer Madness* makes you giggle for good reason

MIT Musical Theatre Guild presents a satire of the fearmongering around marijuana

Reefer Madness

Book by Kevin Murphy and Dan Studney

Music composed by Dan Studney

La Sala de Puerto Rico

Feb. 1–2 and Feb. 7–9 at 8 p.m.

Feb. 3 and Feb. 9 at 2 p.m.

By Lani Lee and Ethan Vo

STAFF WRITERS

Reefer Madness, originally a 1936 propaganda film which argued that marijuana causes a descent into madness, became a cult classic because of the film's unintentional humor in its overly melodramatic indictments of weed. Embracing this cult status, the musical, which originally premiered in 1998, doubles down on the outlandish plot with songs such as "Jimmy Takes a Hit/The Orgy" and "The Brownie Song." Using a framing device of a lecturer narrating a morality tale, the musical tells an exaggerated story of marijuana corrupting youth into performing acts of nudity, violence, and murder. As presented by the MIT Musical Theatre Guild, this production of *Reefer Madness* earns a lot of laughs from the wacky plot and the efforts of the cast and design team.

Audience interaction is key to the storytelling of *Reefer Madness*. Having closer interactions with the characters personalizes the experience and creates a stronger connection with the themes of sensationalism. The actors break the fourth wall frequently, and there are even interactions with the orchestra, such as when the pianist and conductor (River Grace '21) is forced off stage by certain characters. To hold this all together, the Lecturer (Quinn Brodsky '22) is particularly adept at keeping the attention of the audience as she tailors her performance to the reactions of the audience. These interactions make MTG's production of *Reefer Madness* a more personal, impactful, and interesting performance.

The music of this production is superb as well, even with difficulty from the constant changes in key and tempo. The ensemble's ability to adapt to the different music greatly enhances the changing moods throughout the musical. In addition, the catchy and iconic four-note theme returns repeatedly in different forms, highlighting the changes and remaining memorable to the audience. The transitions between songs are incredibly smooth as the orchestra navigates the eclectic score varying in genre from swing to rock and roll. Among the singers, Cassidy Fialkiewicz '22 is the standout performer, delivering powerful vocals as the conscience-stricken Mae. The lead actors Michael Mandanas '22 and Maia Campbell '22 also have their moments to shine near the middle of the musical, with "Little Mary Sunshine," featuring Paul Gallagher G as the giggling Ralph, being one of the more memorable numbers.

On the other hand, the biggest challenge of the production is overcoming its sound issues. This issue can probably be attributed to the venue, La Sala de Puerto Rico, but the onstage band creates another layer of problems since the band often overpowers the vocals. With the band playing in one of the front corners of the stage, sound balance issues arise from the seating location and the movement of the actors, who often retreat deep into the back of the stage and become softer in volume. These sound balance issues are a detriment to the actors singing in the lower parts of their vocal range and to the lyrics, which require careful listening due to their cleverness and the satirical nature of the show.

COURTESY OF JULIE HENION PHOTOGRAPHY

The ensemble confronts Jimmy Harper (Michael Mandanas '22) and Mary Lane (Maia Campbell '22) in the title number of *Reefer Madness.*

Some of the more successful aspects of MTG's production of *Reefer Madness* are its visual elements. In delivering the high energy of the show, the madcap choreography performed by the hardworking ensemble stands out as particularly impressive, such as in the dance number "Down at the Ol' Five and Dime" featuring a great performance from Edward Nguyen '19. The set, although static for the most part, seems more ambitious than ones in previous MTG productions on account of its substantial size and its allowances for clever staging. Finally, the lighting design and frequent visual gags of the show sufficiently convey the campy humor of the ridiculous plot of *Reefer Madness*.

MTG's production of *Reefer Madness* makes fun of the alarmism around marijuana addiction, creating an interactive experience with the talented actors responding to the audience's reactions. The characters and the ensemble work well together with the difficult and catchy music, the eye-catching choreography, and the functional and clever set to deliver an effective performance of this musical. For these reasons, *Reefer Madness*, as produced by MIT Musical Theatre Guild, succeeds as a bawdy satire of the original propaganda film while featuring great performances from familiar faces on campus.

BOOK REVIEW

Rona Wang's debut story collection sings

Empathizing with the lyrical, moving images of queer and Asian identity in *Cranesong*

COURTESY OF HALF MYSTIC PRESS

Rona Wang '21 wrote *Cranesong,* her debut short story collection published by Half Mystic Press.

Cranesong

By Rona Wang

Half Mystic Press

Feb. 13, 2019

By Ivy Li

ARTS EDITOR

What will first strike you about Rona Wang '21's *Cranesong* is how she manages to combine the horrific with the fantastical: "Afterwards, I kept thinking of feathers unfurling from her eye sockets. Her painted lips puckering and pulling into a beak. A mesh of honey-blonde corkscrew curls, ripping out by the roots. Her French manicure calcifying, claw-like. An eternal scream of horror caught in her throat, languageless."

This excerpt from the story "The Evolution of Wings" feels like a dream: the story is about one girl who finds that all the children around her are transforming into birds. In Wang's deft writing, the other stories read like dreams but are grounded in the real. Her writing sits in that comfortable tightrope between poetry and prose; it is neither purple prose nor dry economical retellings but it manages to combine the mesmerizing, horrifying, and heartfelt in swift, deft motions.

The modern stories, despite their images in a stream of pop culture and American teenagedom — referencing KPop, YouTube stars, American high school — are still firmly rooted in history, in race, in identity. The tenuous connection among the stories is that their characters are aware (either consciously or otherwise) of being "the other." For that girl, watching the people around her literally taking off and leaving her behind is a metaphor: that uncomfortable feeling of watching everyone else grow up except you.

Wang has been working on this story collection throughout the course of her time at MIT. "I think most of the stories I wrote in 2017 or 2018," said Wang in an interview with The Tech. "And most of them I wrote for class because I was in a fiction writing class at MIT, or I wrote [while] doing this workshop with a literary magazine, or I wrote it for myself for fun."

The collection is bookended by "Style" and "Dissonance," two portrayals of queer girls molded by an Asian American experience. "Style" treats female sexuality with refreshing honesty but a sympathetic touch. (The killer quote: "Tinder was a cesspool of sex bots and greasy, Mountain-Dew-chugging dudes living in their mothers' basements.") The protagonist in "Style," the rebellious and all-too-relatable Kitty, is given the freedom to fangirl and love and lust and grieve for Janie in different moments without missing a beat. In "Dissonance," Natalie's softer crush on Vera, the new girl who steals the spotlight in youth orchestra, is a mixture of both jealousy and admiration and equally honest as a portrayal of girlhood.

Accompanying these two stories exploring the modern Chinese experience are other stories that tackle discrimination, most notably "Liv, Liv, Lipstick Liar" and "The Art of Acceptance." It's always been relevant: the problem of looking different, of sounding different, of feeling or experiencing the world differently. Wang takes us into Liv's mind in "Liv, Liv, Lipstick Liar" as she oscillates between reluctance to misbehave and the desire to belong in a modern high school ("...Mama always said not to talk bad about teachers, that education is all we FOBs have in this country..."). In "The Art of Acceptance" (the Isabelle de Courtivron Prize winner in 2018), Wang writes from the perspective of a Chinese girl living in New York's Chinatown during WWII where anti-Japanese sentiment runs rampant in the streets and Chinese people must wear their I AM CHINESE pins to protect themselves. Its foreboding first words tell us what is to come: "Before the white boys found him, Jin-John Tsao was going to go to Harvard."

"[As a child] I didn't know that Asian Americans or people who looked like me could be heroes of the story," says Wang. "That was something that was really important to me, to write stories in which Chinese people or Chinese American people could be the heroes of their own stories." The stories in the collection are varied experiences because the experience of being Asian in America is not uniform, but the empathy with which Wang writes and the stories told contain universal truths.

Cranesong is a beautiful debut story collection, stringing together characters exploring their identities: what does it mean to be an artist, to be female, to be Asian, to be Asian American, to be queer? Many of the stories are less about this assuredness of one's culture and more of one's search for what it means to be torn between cultures and histories. As Wang explains, "I feel like in writing and in poetry and in painting, all of these are ways of us trying to understand who we are and translate our mind into something others can understand. There's always this chasm where it's never truly possible and I wanted to communicate that through a story."

Full interview to come next week. Preorder *Cranesong* on Half Mystic's website.

Editor's note: Rona Wang '21 has written for The Tech *but was not involved in creating this review except for being interviewed as the novelist.*